A

GENUINE NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE

AND

THEATRICAL TRANSACTIONS

OF

Mr. JOHN HENDERSON,

COMMONLY CALLED

THE BATH ROSCIUS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει, καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων.

HESIOD.

——*Nunquamne reponam,*
Vexatus toties? JUVENAL.

LONDON:
Printed for J. Ireland, the Corner of Beaufort-Buildings, Strand.
M,DCC,LXXVIII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

PERHAPS no man, who through his whole life has behaved ſo inoffenſively as Mr. Henderſon, was ever more ſeverely as well as unjuſtly treated. The diſpenſers of theatrical favours, inſtead of conſidering him as a candidate for fame, and one who had ſome claim to their protection and encouragement, ſeemed to have viewed him with an hoſtile eye. When two great Managers,

men diſtinguiſhed for their various abilities, had diſcouraged his application for employment in London, he found patronage at Bath from the nobility and all ranks of people, who either reſide in, or occaſionally viſit, that city. His ſucceſs there made him hope that the ample approbation of thoſe who form the moſt conſiderable and polite part of a London audience, might probably prove the paſſport or recommendation to the gentlemen patentees of our eſtabliſhed theatres; but his ambition was diſappointed, and theſe men, who are thought to have the eyes of a Lynx in whatever regards their own intereſt, were either overſtocked with actors of genius, ſo as to find no room for Henderſon, or looked upon him as a man of ſmall abilities, and not worthy of their bidding a very moderate price for him.

The

The following ſheets contain a plain narrative of facts, vouchers of which can be produced if demanded. No colouring has been attempted, except, perhaps, in deſcribing Henderſon's firſt interview with Mr. Foote; ſo glaring a ſubject might poſſibly demand ſome particular exertion, at leaſt an attempt to draw the peculiar manner of that remarkable man; and it is hoped, that though the portrait ſhould be faint and unequal, it may be tolerated.

Truths will often offend, we know, merely becauſe they are truths; and if offence ſhould ariſe here, it can proceed from nothing elſe. A ſhort vindication of Mr. Henderſon was thought neceſſary. He has been made the ſubject of much unjuſt obloquy and illiberal cenſure, for no other reaſon in the world

than becauſe he is ſucceſsful; the plan of his enemies was concerted with a view to make him a drawer of water and hewer of wood through life. Had he continued ſtill a turn-ſpit at Bath, I mean confined to the drudgery of Mr. Palmer's theatre, where he might have acted thirty new characters in a ſeaſon, how happy and how pleaſed would his enemies have been!

But mark the conſequence of acting with applauſe at a London theatre royal. Then the criticks, and others their aſſociates, open in full cry againſt him; one calls him a pragmatical puppy for daring to act Garrick's parts, as if Garrick, like the Emperor Tiberius, wiſhed the world on fire when he was dead. Another tells him that he cannot act a particular character, becauſe he has neither voice nor

nor figure ſuitable to it. However, he bids him be of good comfort, for if he will but liſten to his advice, he will, notwithſtanding theſe eminent defects, teach him to act it very well; that is, he will make him a preſent of a ſtrong voice and a large figure.

One reproaches him with imitating Garrick too much; but before he has finiſhed his critical lecture, he adviſes him not to be ſo fond of himſelf, but to copy the great Roſcius more exactly.

One man declares that he is a fellow of no family; ſo that poor Henderſon is reduced to give ſome account of his parentage, for fear he ſhould be in Prince Prettyman's caſe, in the Rehearſal, who was not unhappy to be called the fiſherman's

man's ſon, but to be thought that he came into the world without a father.

The terms inſolent, arrogant, avaricious, and impudent, have been moſt liberally beſtowed upon him in private converſation, and in the public prints.

However, he cannot be very unhappy, ſince the kind publick, who are always willing to ſupport the ſmalleſt promiſe of ability, and the leaſt ſpark of genius, and to encourage any the leaſt indication of diligence and aſſiduity, have taken him by the hand.

He wiſhes to ſtand or fall by their deciſion only.

Many expreſſions of ill-will, and of unprovoked reſentment, unworthy the mouths

mouths of thoſe who uttered them, are entirely ſuppreſſed; much peeviſh and ſpiteful behaviour, to ſay no worſe, from perſons of known eminence (though to publiſh ſuch kind of anecdotes would gratify many curious people) is ſilently paſſed over. Matters that would bear the higheſt colouring and warmeſt tints, if theatrical hiſtory could deſerve them, are thrown into ſhade. The whole is ſubmitted to the impartial reader.

ANEC-

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ANEC-

ANECDOTES

OF

MR. HENDERSON.

MR. JOHN HENDERSON, the Actor, was born in London; his family was originally Scotch, and was ſettled at Fordell, a town in the north of Scotland. He is deſcended in a right line from the famous Dr. Alexander Henderſon, who maintained the cauſe of the Covenant, and the Preſbyterian church diſcipline, in a conference at the Iſle of Wight with

Charles the Firſt, in oppoſition to the hierarchy and the government of the Church by Biſhops.

He diſcovered, in his early youth, a propenſity to drawing, and was, for ſome time, a pupil of Mr. Fournier, an eminent maſter in that art. He was ſoon after invited to the houſe of a near relation, a ſilverſmith of very conſiderable buſineſs, in St. James's-ſtreet, who purpoſed to employ him in making drawings and deſigns for his own profeſſion; but the death of this gentleman put an end to all ſchemes of that nature.

When Mr. Henderſon was very young, his mother put a volume of Shakeſpeare into his hands; the conſtant reading of this author inſpired him with a paſſion for repreſenting on the ſtage characters ſo much admired by him in his cloſet: he fancied that he underſtood and could act them with propriety.

So long as ten years ſince, he made application to Mr. George Garrick, and begged

begged that gentleman would hear him rehearſe, and give his judgment of his abilities for the ſtage. His voice was then ſo feeble, that he was told by Mr. G. Garrick, that he could not poſſibly convey articulate ſounds to the audience of any theatre; and indeed, at that time, his friends were apprehenſive that he was in danger of falling into a conſumptive habit.

In a few years he recovered health and ſpirits: he was ſtill purſued by an ardent paſſion for acting. By Mr. Becket's intereſt, he was introduced to the Manager of Drury-Lane.

The permiſſion to attend the levee of ſo great a man as Mr. Garrick, was, for ſome time, ſufficient food to Henderſon's appetite; who thought it a degree of happineſs to be favoured with half a look, to be ſmiled upon, to be ſaluted with a diſtant bow, to be aſked in familiar terms the news of the day.

But when he underſtood, by that great miſtreſs of inſtruction, Experience, that he could make no progreſs by the cloſeſt attendance in his favourite plan of raiſing his fortune by acting; that the great diſpenſer of theatrical favours was engaged either in buſineſs or in pleaſure; he began to feel all that anxiety and vexation which muſt affect a liberal mind; that painful ſituation, that corroding torture, which Cowley ſo emphatically deſcribes:

"—— Is there a man on earth I hate?
"Attendance and dependence be his fate."

Tired with paying daily, though fruitleſs, homage to the preſiding Genius of Drury Lane, he was determined to try his fortune with the Acting Manager of Covent-garden Theatre, Mr. Colman, a gentleman equally celebrated for his polite behaviour, and his learning and genius. But here he was miſerably diſappointed: for the firſt queſtion this Manager put to him was, whether he had ever been upon the ſtage before, or was a princi-

pal

pal performer? Our young Hero was diſconcerted with this unexpected demand; and modeſtly anſwered, that he wiſhed to know the Manager's opinion, whether he had any theatrical abilities or not? Mr. Colman gave him no opportunity to diſplay his talents, and diſmiſſed him rather abruptly.

After two years cloſe attendance and conſtant ſolicitation, Mr. Garrick condeſcended to grant Henderſon a day of audience; he heard him rehearſe ſeveral ſcenes in variety of characters. After ſome heſitation, the Manager gave it as his opinion, that his voice was not ſufficiently melodious or clear, nor his pronunciation articulate enough; or, to make uſe of his own terms, "that he had in his mouth too much wool or worſted, which he muſt abſolutely get rid of before he was fit for Drury-Lane ſtage." However, not to diſcourage him entirely, he furniſhed him with a letter to Mr. Palmer, the Manager of the Bath Company,

who engaged him at a ſalary of one guinea *per* week.

It is not unreaſonable to aſk, what could induce a gentleman of Mr. Garrick's excellent underſtanding and perfect knowledge of the world, to hold in ſuſpenſe a young fellow for ſo long a period of time as two years; when, in all probability, his proſpect of riſing in life, nay his dependence for the means of ſupport, might be derived from his hopes of ſucceeding on the ſtage? Candour forbids we ſhould impute this conduct either to wantonneſs or malevolence; but, I fear, it was owing to ſomething equally pernicious to the ſufferer, though not proceeding from cauſes ſo cenſurable—To the giving way to an idle cuſtom of ſeeing dependents at a levee; to a mode of indulging unmeaning proffers and promiſes of ſervice; to the keeping up a barbarous parade of politeneſs, which few men of large fortune and great power have reſolution to break through.

Henderſon

Henderſon has complained to his intimate friends, that he has often ſet out from his lodgings to the Manager's houſe in Southampton-ſtreet, with a heavy and deſponding heart, and returned home more melancholy than he ſet out.

This cuſtom of encouraging the vain attendance of expecting ſolicitors, is too frequent every where; but, I believe, more encouraged by managers of theatres, than even by the firſt officers of the ſtate.

It would be ungenerous, as well as ungrateful, to deny the efficacy of Mr. Garrick's recommendation of Henderſon. When it was buzzed about the rooms, in the walks, and all over the city of Bath, that a new actor was arrived from London under the patronage of the great Roſcius, all people, of whatever rank, were eager to ſee the phænomenon. The houſe was ſoon filled, and he had the ſatisfaction to act Hamlet to a very brilliant audience. His apprehenſion of not pleaſing was ſo exceſſive, that he

could ſcarce be heard at firſt; but the generous indulgence of the ſpectators, who felt their own importance in the awe and reſpect he paid them, ſoon eaſed him of his fears, and inſpired him with courage. He finiſhed his part not only with great applauſe, but loud acclamation.

Many judicious perſons, who were preſent at this firſt trial of Henderſon's abilities, and who have ſeen him often ſince in the character of Hamlet, give it now as their opinion, that though practice has ſomewhat bettered his manner, improved his action, and increaſed the ſtrength of his voice; yet that, in drawing the outline of the part, he was very exact, and that his feeling in many important ſcenes was natural and affecting. He was particularly approved and applauded in the ſhort interview between Hamlet and Horatio, in the 3d act, where the Prince breaks out into that honeſt effuſion of cordial friendſhip ſo natural to a great

a great and generous mind. His advice to the players, and the celebrated cloſet ſcene, produced the ſame effect then as they have done ſince at London.

The Bath Manager, who found his account in the frequent employing of Henderſon, plied him with great variety of characters; he is ſuppoſed to have acted not much leſs than thirty different parts the firſt year of his engagement, and generally to large audiences. He became ſo great a favourite, that he very ſoon acquired the title of the Bath Roſcius. People of the firſt rank ſpoke highly of his merit. Men of genius, ſuch as Paul Whitehead, and Mr. Gainſborough the painter, ſoon diſtinguiſhed him from the common herd of Players. Dr. Schomberg and the amiable Mr. John Beard joined their voices to that of the publick in general, and recommended him warmly to the notice of the London Managers.

After

After the firſt Bath campaign, not a little elevated with his ſucceſs, and full of the applauſe and approbation of men whom he had been taught to believe judges of theatrical merit, he paid a viſit to London. He imagined that the doors of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden Theatres would be thrown open to him; and, with a vanity natural to young minds, he fancied he had nothing to do but to make his choice where he ſhould fix his ſtandard.

But, alas! he was greatly diſappointed; the Managers either did not give credit to the praiſes conferred upon him by his friends, or thought they had a right to judge for themſelves.

Leake was invited to an entertainment, where Henderſon exerted all his ſkill to convince him of his merit:—He uttered ſpeeches, he repeated fables, gave him ſome ſelect paſſages of Sterne's Triſtram Shandy, and ſpoke, or rather acted, merry tales of honeſt Mat. Prior. In this

this whimſical and motley farrago of entertainment, Henderſon diſplayed much eaſe, great ſpirit, elegance, and humour—but all in vain—Leake, like the deaf adder, was inſenſible to all the arts employed to charm him. His objections I never could learn. Mr. Leake is a gentleman of profound taciturnity. It is moſt probable that he referred Henderſon to the Acting Manager: ſome are of opinion, that his moſt cogent argument for not encouraging him, ſprung from œconomical principles; he was afraid that he ſhould demand a ſalary of at leaſt three or four pounds *per* week; others would inſinuate that he did not like Henderſon's manner of pronouncing his two favourite vowels.

Chagrined and mortified with the repulſes he had encountered at London, Henderſon returned to his ſtation at Bath: however, the vexation he felt did not ſlacken his ardour for improvement; he quickly added new luſtre to his theatrical fame,

fame, by acting Falſtaff, and ſeveral others of Shakeſpeare's characters. His friends at Bath, by their conſtant and repeated applauſe, ſoothed his vexations and diſappointments; and he began to be reconciled to his ſituation. Before the end of his ſecond campaign, the ſeveral Patentees of the London theatres had ſeen him act a variety of characters; but although the public was as loud in his favour as ever, the ſtill and powerful voice of the Manager was as ſtrongly againſt him.

Whether the timber of which the London ſtages are made may be of a different compoſition or ſtructure from that of Bath; or whether there may not be a certain magiek or incantation belonging to the firſt, of which the other cannot pretend to boaſt, I will not pretend to ſay: but, in anſwer to the continual recommendations of various and reſpectable perſons, it was ſaid, "That "the young fellow was deſtitute of every "requiſite

"requiſite for a London theatre—he "will do mighty well in a confined and "ſmall ſtage—vaſtly ſo, for *Bath*; but "give me leave to tell you, Sir, that "the boards of Drury-Lane, &c. are "quite another thing."

This was an excellent reaſon, it muſt be confeſſed, where no better could be given.

Mr. Colman, indeed, honeſtly told Henderſon his objections to him in Shylock: the dreſs, he ſaid, was too ſhabby; it had the appearance of one hired from a pawnbroker; and in the third act, in his impaſſioned ſcene with Tubal, he ſeemed to him a black Lear, or an odd reſemblance of the mad king in a ſtorm. I ſhall leave theſe powerful objections to be weighed by the reader.

Not diſcouraged by his former repulſe, the Bath Roſcius, at the end of his ſecond campaign, viſited Mr. Garrick in London: who received him politely; heard him rehearſe parts at his own houſe, and upon the

the ſtage, but all in vain. Whether the *wool* had not been ſufficiently picked out of his mouth, or for what cauſe I know not, after the uſual civilities, he was diſmiſſed from attendance. Some perſons, more remarkable for warmth of temper than prudence, ventured to aſſure Mr. Garrick, that as ſoon as Henderſon could be ſeen in certain characters, ſuch as Benedict and Don John, the people of this metropolis would all run after him.

Theſe ſanguine people ſhould have recollected, that as a General of an army wiſhes to have the glory of a victory or any great action to himſelf, ſo a Manager of a playhouſe, if he cannot diſcern merit in a candidate for theatrical fame, will not find it out by the judgment of another man.

Before Henderſon left London, he was adviſed to try if Mr. Foote would not give him an opportunity of ſhewing himſelf at his theatre in the Hay-market. Two friends accompanied him to North-

End. Our modern Ariſtophanes welcomed the viſitants with great civility; but ſuch is the volatility of his genius, that it was not poſſible to announce the errand immediately; he muſt be permitted to indulge his peculiar humour, and to let off a few voluntaries before he could be induced to hear of any buſineſs whatſoever. Foote's imagination is ſo lively, and his conceptions ſo rapid as well as exuberant, that his converſation is a cataract or torrent of wit, humour, pleaſantry, and ſatire. The company had ſcarce unfolded their buſineſs, when he gave them the hiſtory of Sir Gregory Grinwell and my Lady Barbara Bramble. The whimſical ſituations into which he put his characters, with his lively and ſarcaſtical remarks, threw the company into convulſions of laughter.

However, Henderſon's friends thought it was now time to ſtop the current of Mr. Foote's vivacities, by informing him of the reaſon of their viſit: one of them took

took the lead:—" Sir, our young friend, " the Bath Roſcius, would think him- " ſelf extremely happy to have the opi- " nion of ſo acknowledged a judge of " theatrical merit as you are; he wiſhes " you would permit him to rehearſe a " ſcene of a play."

" Well, Sir, what are you for, the " ſock or the buſkin? I'll be hanged if " you are not quite enamoured of that " bouncing brimſtone Tragedy."—" Mr. " Henderſon is not confined, Sir, to " either."—" Stick to the ſock, young " gentleman; the one is all nature, and " the other all art and trick. Tragedy " is mere theatrical bombaſt, the very " fungus of the theatre. Come, Sir, " give us a taſte of your quality."—Here Henderſon began a ſpeech in Hamlet; when Foote, turning round to one of the company, ſaid, " Have you not heard " in what manner this impudent little " ſcoundrel has treated me?"—" I pro- " teſt, Sir, I don't know whom you " mean."—

" mean."—" No! where have you left " your apprehenſion? Let me but tell " you what a damned trick he ſerved " me lately, by lending me a large ſum " of money."—" Conſider, my dear Sir, " the time grows late, and we are to " dine in town."—" No, no," ſaid Foote, " you ſhall dine with me upon a ſtewed " rump of beef and a diſh of fiſh. Now " Mr. Henderſon begin." Well, once more he endeavoured to open, when, behold! an unlucky joke, a *petite hiſtoire*, ſome droll thought, or ſome unaccountable idea, prevented the diſconcerted actor from diſplaying his powers of elocution. His caſe was now become extremely pitiable.

However, after hearing this ſingular genius read an act of his new comedy, take-off Lady Betty Bigamy, recite the whole trial of himſelf and George Faulkner, ridicule the Iriſh Lord Chief Juſtice Robinſon for condemning his Peter Paragraph for a libel, ſpeak a prologue in

the character of Peter, laugh at our moſt celebrated orators of the bar, mimic the Members of both Houſes of Parliament, tell ſome ludicrous ſtories of Capt. Bodens and the Iriſh chairman; Henderſon was permitted to repeat, without interruption, Mr. Garrick's prologue, which he ſpoke on his firſt appearance after his arrival from the continent. This being no caricature, but a genuine and fair repreſentation of the great Roſcius's manner, without the leaſt exaggeration, we cannot be ſurprized that it did not make any impreſſion upon Mr. Foote: however, he paid the ſpeaker a compliment upon the goodneſs of his ear. Dinner was now announced; every thing was princely, and in ſplendid order. Wit flew about the table; I mean Mr. Foote's, for I would adviſe every man that has any wit of his own, who ſhall have the honour to dine with this gentleman, to bottle it up for another occaſion, for he is himſelf maſter of enough,

and

and to ſpare, for ten companies. I need not obſerve that many portraits were drawn, and ſome of them in a maſterly ſtile.

The humorous and ſatirical paintings of this gentleman are attributed by many to mere rancour and malevolence; I cannot be of that opinion; ſcarce any man, like Foote, who has been generous even to profuſion, was ever known to be very malicious. The excellent Hogarth recorded faces for his humorous and moral pictures, as he walked in the park or in the ſtreets, at the playhouſe, or elſewhere; he ſtole whatever Nature preſented to his view in all places, and made what he ſaw his own. So our modern Ariſtophanes obliges every friend and every foe to contribute to his characteriſtical plan. Every man he is familiar with, ſits to him for his picture, and thus he gets matter for his Comic Muſe.

When Henderſon took his leave of him, he whiſpered one of the company

in the ear, "*that he would not do**." Mr. Foote confirmed the death-warrant that had been already ſigned by *Garrick*, *Colman*, *Leake*, and *Harris*.

Thus was Henderſon, for the third time, through want of encouragement at London, reduced to the neceſſity of returning to Bath; but ſo eager was he to change his ſituation, and to exhibit upon a London ſtage, that, towards the end of the year 1774, he wrote to Mr. Garrick, and propoſed, at his own riſque and expence, to act on Drury-Lane ſtage in the characters of Hamlet and Shylock; and to be determined by the voice of the public, reſpecting the event of his good or ill ſucceſs in thoſe parts. This offer was likewiſe communicated to Mr. Garrick by Mr. Taylor of Bath, a common friend of both, who ſolicited and urged Mr. Gar-

* Since Mr. Foote has ſeen Mr. Henderſon act, he not only congratulated him in the ſtrongeſt terms upon his great and deſerved ſucceſs, but has very obligingly ſpoken of him to his friends, as an actor of genius.

rick

rick to accept the propoſal of Mr. Henderſon. Mr. Garrick anſwered Mr. Taylor very explicitly:—He thought the propoſal would be very injurious to Mr. Henderſon himſelf; he could not ſuppoſe that his playing two characters would give the public a proper idea of his merit. As an actor of ſenſibility, ſuch a ſlender or partial exhibition of his talents might, from his too great feelings, injure his repreſentation, and render him leſs capable of pleaſing the public, who would be called upon to eſtimate his merit.

Mr. Garrick, in the ſame letter, obſerved, that if Mr. Henderſon could have an opportunity to act ten or twelve times in two or three different characters, his genius would have fair play. As his well-wiſher, he ſtrenuouſly proteſts againſt the other ſcheme; but if Henderſon choſe to be with him, why not fix upon Hamlet, Shylock, Benedict, or any other part he pleaſed to appear in

next winter. He thinks the former a partial manner of trial, which would be of no ſervice to the manager, and of prejudice to the actor.

It muſt ſeem very ſingular, that Mr. Garrick ſhould appear all of a ſudden ſo warm in the intereſt of Henderſon; and I would aſk the reaſon why he would not accept an offer that was ſcarce ever refuſed, of giving a man who had any pretenſions to abilities, an opportunity to ſhew them? This manager, who had for three years turned a deaf ear to all ſolicitations in Henderſon's favour, by an unaccountable revolution of temper, or a perfect reverſe of politicks, ſeems to be awakened all at once to the tendereſt feelings of humanity, generouſly to ſupport a man whom he had hitherto deſpiſed, rejected, and diſcountenanced. There is ſomething not reconcilable to common apprehenſion in this. Mr. Garrick ſays, that Henderſon's acting a part or two would be of no ſervice to the manager—

nager—but, why ſo?—Would not he be ſure, on ſuch an occaſion, to fill his houſe? His expences of cloaths and ſcenes could be but a mere trifle; for what new ornament does an old play, ſuch as Hamlet or the Merchant of Venice, require?

In anſwer to Mr. Garrick's letter, Henderſon, who ſeems greatly upon his guard, after thanking him profuſely for his anxious apprehenſions in his favour, and after ſome compliments due to a man ſo very eminent, makes a new offer—which is, to act the enſuing winter, at Drury-Lane theatre, the parts of Hamlet, Shylock, Richard, and Lear; with ſuch other characters, in the courſe of the ſeaſon, to which he could give a proper finiſhing; but as to theſe he reſerves a negative voice. In a ſecond and third ſeaſon he propoſes to add four more additional characters each year, and to act other parts under the ſame reſtriction as already mentioned.

This little anecdote conveys a ſtriking leſſon to mankind. A young raw adventurer, who had in vain for two years ſolicited a great and diſtinguiſhed Manager for the favour only of a hearing, and had for three years after ſucceſſively intreated to be admitted one of his troop, by a capricious reverſe of fortune, preſumes to dictate the terms upon which he will condeſcend to covenant with the man who had treated him with ſo much neglect.

On a ſlight view of Henderſon's conduct, I can have no doubt of his being generally condemned by thoſe who are unacquainted with the ſeducing tricks, and captivating arts, which are practiſed in a theatre, and are congenial to the ſpot on which it ſtands.

It ſeems too that Mr. Garrick propoſed, that Mr. Henderſon ſhould be engaged for a certain term, I think three years, the ſalary to be ſettled by their common friends, with this proviſo, that it was

not

not to be leſs than 5l. *per* week, nor to exceed 10l. But how miſerably cautious is this!—why no more than 10l. if the public voice declared in the actor's favour? Did Mr. Garrick himſelf ſubmit to ſuch paltry and unjuſt limitations? Far be it from me to leſſen the merit of the great Roſcius, or to compare any man to him, who ſtands alone; but there are, and will ever be, degrees of excellence.

But to wave digreſſion.—Henderſon's ſituation, if he had ſwallowed the bait thrown out, would have been very diſagreeable as well as precarious. Two actors of good eſtimation, Mr. Smith and Mr. Reddiſh, were then in poſſeſſion of the principal characters; the ſalary of the firſt was eſtimated at 14l. *per* week, of the other at 12l. The friends of Henderſon and Garrick were to determine his weekly income; which could not, upon an average, exceed, as they were reſtricted to terms, 7l. or 8l. *per* week.

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The balancing of accounts does not furniſh much pleaſantry or wit; but the reader will pardon the dullneſs of the narrative, when truth is eſtabliſhed, and perhaps curioſity eſſentially gratified.

Eminent actors, I am told, claim a right by their articles to the principal parts in all acting plays. What then could Henderſon expect? Nothing but the leavings or offals of Smith and Reddiſh; ſo that, after he had figured in a part or two, and gained what the managers wanted, much more than his ſalary, in two or three times performance; he muſt have been afterwards perfectly idle, or little more than a mere looker-on.

The generoſity of a Manager, we are well authorized to ſay, cannot be depended upon. Holland acted all the principal characters in tragedy, five years ſucceſſively, under 5l. *per* week. If any young actor deſerved a noble reward and ſingular encouragement, we may preſume to ſay that it was the late Mr. Powell.

Mr.

Mr. Lacy, the manager, ingenuouſly avowed his obligations to him: he publicly declared, that the winter in which Powell firſt acted was, by his means, rendered the moſt profitable he had ever known. It is computed that Powell's great fame and abilities, and his inceſſant labours, brought no leſs a ſum into the treaſury of Drury-Lane theatre than nine or ten thouſand pounds; for all this meritorious ſervice, his weekly income was not more than fifty ſhillings. Mr. Lacy, indeed, after the firſt month's performance, *generouſly* preſented him with a bank note of fifty pounds! However, this gentleman received from his employers no more than the ſum of 130l. or 140l. for ſupporting the credit of Drury-Lane theatre a whole year, during the abſence of Mr. Garrick *!

* Candour requires us to inform the reader, that Mr. Powell's ſalary, the ſecond year of his acting, was increaſed to 10l. or 12l. *per* week. Mr. Holland's weekly income was put on the ſame footing with Mr. Powell's.

I pre-

I preſume nobody will now very much blame our Bath Roſcius for his extreme caution; or call that inſolence and arrogance, which was, indeed, the effect of reaſon, prudence, and ſagacity.

Mr. Garrick, we may ſuppoſe, was not a little ſurprized on the receipt of Henderſon's propoſal. He anſwered his letter in terms of anger and reſentment; he reproached him for his attempt to take the management of the theatre out of his hands, and to render him a mere cypher in his own dominions. This indeed was an affront that no actor of the higheſt merit had ever preſumed to put upon him.

Henderſon, in his reply to Mr. Garrick's angry letter, endeavoured to convince him of the propriety of his behaviour; he diſclaimed the moſt diſtant intention of inſult, and tried every method in his power to convince him that he wiſhed to be ſubordinate to his directions,

tions, provided he did not feel himſelf unequal to the taſk impoſed upon him.

When we candidly examine the matter in debate between Mr. Garrick and Mr. Henderſon, we muſt conclude that the latter had reaſon to ſuſpect and to be on his guard; and that the former, if we ſuppoſe him ſincere in his profeſſions of friendſhip, was juſtly offended, and that he properly reſented the other's ill treatment. By fineſſe in conduct, and the practice of too much art, we gain a character, which on certain occaſions, when we are really open and ſincere, we do not deſerve; but this is the conſequence of a behaviour which is not regulated by uniform ſincerity and plain dealing*. Perhaps, after all, Henderſon's feelings were too exquiſite; we may ſuppoſe that he feared where he ought to have truſted;

* It is ſaid that a manager's ſituation is a very tickliſh one.—I grant it; but firmly believe it is often made ſo by artificial behaviour, when a plainer manner of acting would do the buſineſs as well or better.

however,

however, his fault is pardonable, if it be one, when we conſider all circumſtances.

Henderſon had ſo often attempted to make a figure upon a London theatre, and was ſo repeatedly repulſed, that he gave up all ambitious hopes of ſhining in any part of England, except in Bath and the places adjacent.

At laſt, what neither the united petitions of the nobility, of men of genius, and the profeſſors of the polite arts, and indeed of perſons in all ranks could effect, was brought about by mere chance and neceſſity.

When Mr. Colman purchaſed of Mr. Foote the patent for acting plays at the theatre in the Haymarket, he muſt have ſeen at the ſame time the poſſible contingences ariſing from his ſituation. From the infirmities, as well as advanced age, of Mr. Foote, he conceived it not improbable that that gentleman might not be enabled to furniſh his quota of public entertainment, either in writing or acting,

ing*. He caſt about then, and his good ſenſe informed him, that it was not impoſſible but that Henderſon might occaſionally ſupply Mr. Foote's place, and prove a happy ſuccedaneum. We muſt not ſuppoſe that this manager entertained any exalted ideas of the player's abilities; but the bare poſſibility of his being well received by the public, was an object worthy his attention. His proffer of a hundred pounds for the ſummer cam-

* When this narrative was at the preſs, news arrived of Mr. Foote's ſudden death at Dover. The dramatic world has not, for many years, ſuſtained a loſs ſo great and irreparable. His genius ſtruck out a new path to fame. His comedies abound in wit, ſatire, humour, and character. He boldly attacked vice in the higher orders of life, and unmaſked the great and dignified robber, the pretended patron of merit, the abſurd fine gentleman where greatneſs takes its riſe from plunder, the ſhy demure hypocrite, the enthuſiaſtic and ridiculous politician; in ſhort, wherever vice, abſurdity, or affectation was to be found, he was ſure to let fly his ſhafts, and never miſſed hiting the mark he aimed at. Foote, in drawing dramatic figures, reſembled that great and immortal genius Hogarth, in his moral paintings. Their pictures were equally true, ſtriking, and characteriſtical. They contain a faithful hiſtory of the vices, follies, cuſtoms, and corruptions of the age they lived in.

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paign was eagerly embraced by Henderſon, whoſe ſupreme and only wiſh was to be ſeen by a London audience. He took no care to ſtipulate any advantages reſpecting a benefit, and Colman was in hopes that he had cheaply purchaſed a good neſt-egg.

The public has juſtified the conjectures of the manager, which were fulfilled beyond his hopes. Mr. Foote, after acting twice or thrice, was attacked with a paralytic diſorder, which rendered him incapable of farther ſervice during the remainder of the ſeaſon. Gay's Polly, or the ſecond part of the Beggar's Opera, from which great expectations were raiſed, was acted ſeveral times with little or no emolument to the manager.

The Barber of Spain was judged more farcical than comic, though it certainly did not want laughable merit; and Digges, though much approved in Wolſey, did not draw audiences to fill the theatre. But Henderſon's name was a powerful

powerful charm, that, in the heat of ſummer, and during the dog-days, brought to the theatre all that was great and beautiful, lovely and commanding, in both ſexes; grave Miniſters * and ancient Dowagers forgot their cares and their cards, to obſerve the Jew's malignity, to enjoy Falſtaff's mirth, to partake the terrors of Richard, and to laugh at the frolic of Don John.

It is computed that no leſs a ſum than 4500l. was taken during the 34 nights of Henderſon's performance.

I ſhould not act the part of a faithful narrator, if I did not obſerve that Mr. Colman's behaviour to Henderſon was as polite as generous; he gave him a benefit free from all charges, and upon a day that made it very advantageous to him.

But, notwithſtanding this great and unexpected ſucceſs, ſo conſtant to their own opinion were Leake and Harris, that

* Lord North and his family were frequently at the Haymarket when Henderſon acted.

they could not be converted by the voice of an unprejudiced public. By their wiſe interpreter and aid-de-camp Mr. Sarjant the box-keeper, they inſinuated, that Henderſon would not preſume to act upon Covent-garden or Drury-Lane ſtage, becauſe he was not equal to a ſecond or third character.

But Mr. Sheridan was not to be ſwayed by ſuch grave authority as Meſſ. Harris, Leake, and the Box-keeper. When he had ſeen Henderſon's Hamlet the ſecond time, he engaged him; and, to his honour it muſt be ſaid, upon no mean and parſimonious conditions; his ſalary was fixed at 10l. and Mr. Sheridan undertook at the ſame time to pay the forfeiture of articles to Palmer the Bath manager, which amounted to 300l.*; ſo that upon an average he receives a greater ſalary than any young actor ever enjoyed the firſt year of his engagement.

* Henderſon is in articles for two years; and the additional 300l. to his weekly income makes it amount to 15l. *per* week.

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There was nothing wanting to Henderſon's felicity, but the countenance of Mr. Garrick. Though this great man had refuſed, from perhaps very juſtifiable reaſons, at leaſt to himſelf, all the efforts made in his favour for many years; and though, when he ſeemed inclined to receive him upon certain conditions, an unhappy miſunderſtanding had prevented an union; yet ſtill the friends of both gentlemen wiſhed they might no longer continue on diſagreeable terms.

Mr. T. a member of the Iriſh parliament, a gentleman well known for his great abilities, and much eſteemed and beloved for his many amiable virtues, laboured ſtrongly to reconcile Mr. Garrick to Mr. Henderſon; and at laſt brought matters to ſuch a criſis, that he wrote to Henderſon, for whom he has ever manifeſted a ſincere regard and friendſhip, that Mr. Garrick was willing to give up all reſentment; and that, when he ſhould arrive in town, it was ex-

pected that he would pay his reſpects to Mr. Garrick.

Theſe little goſſiping ſtories ſeem to be of little importance—But of what is the hiſtory of man compoſed? Man, made up of paſſion and weakneſs, ſubject to caprice and governed by humour!—Beſides, the dignity of the perſon gives conſequence to trifles. A Garrick quarreling with Henderſon for a ſtraw, becomes an object of attention. But to reſume my ſtory:—Upon the ſtrength of Mr. T's letter, Henderſon deſired a friend of his, who was well acquainted with Mr. Garrick, to call upon him with his reſpects, and to aſſure him that he ſhould think himſelf happy in waiting upon him as ſoon as he arrived in town.

This was communicated in a letter to Mr. Garrick, from their common friend. The anſwer was unexpected, and to this purpoſe: That he ſhould be very glad at all times to ſee the writer of the letter; but that he could not think of having any

connection with a man who had ridiculed him by mimickry, and had expoſed and laughed at his letters.

The charge of mimickry we ſhall beg leave to diſmiſs, till the other accuſation, which is of a much deeper dye, is fairly anſwered and confuted. The letter to which Mr. Garrick alludes, I have read; a very good one it is, and of the moſt friendly and cordial kind. The chief purport of it was, to warn Henderſon not to be too much elated with ſucceſs, and to inſtruct him how he might improve his time to the beſt advantage. He admoniſhed him to be cautious of his company, and to avoid the rocks which many of the *dramatis perſonæ* had ſplit upon, by miſpending their time, and acquiring a habit of idleneſs and drinking among the vain pretenders to theatrical merit. He likewiſe adviſes him to peruſe other books beſides plays, and to acquire ſuch farther knowledge as might add to his importance in life. In ſhort, the whole

letter conſiſts of kind, I had almoſt ſaid parental, admonition. If we could poſſibly ſuppoſe that any man could be ſo diſhoneſt and abſurd as to ridicule ſuch a letter, he ought to be ſhunned as an ungrateful and a worthleſs wretch; but the reverſe of this is true: Mr. Garrick has been groſsly abuſed. There is a letter (written by Henderſon, ſoon after the receipt of Mr. Garrick's, to the common friend whom I have juſt mentioned) ſtill extant; in which Henderſon, after acquainting him that he had retired from company to apply himſelf cloſely to ſtudy, declares, that he had no pleaſure but in the correſpondence with which Mr. Garrick was pleaſed to honour him. Add to this, that Henderſon abſolutely denies the charge: he poſitively declares he never could be guilty of ſuch baſeneſs and treachery; he challenges Mr. Garrick to produce his witneſs, whom he will confront before himſelf, or any perſon or perſons he ſhall appoint.

appoint. I ſhall be excuſed in dwelling the longer upon this queſtion, as Mr. Henderſon's moral character was deeply concerned in its being cleared up.

Should I gravely undertake to refute the diſmal charge of mimickry, I ſhould deſerve to be laughed at for my pains.

The habit of taking-off, or mimickry, though not one of the elegant and polite arts, is at leaſt an imitative one, and greatly depends upon a good ear and lively imagination; nor do I know any man, that has this gift in his poſſeſſion, who will take a ſelf-denying ordinance, and forbear the uſe of it. While confined within moderate bounds, the practice may be permitted as harmleſs and diverting. A cruel uſe of it has been made in public, by which ſome people have ſuffered more than vexation. I need not repeat inſtances freſh in every body's memory. Mr. Garrick was himſelf ſo truly ſenſible of the injury given to individuals by ſtage mimickry, that, after a

very ſhort trial of his powers in that bewitching art, he gave it up, and never could be perſuaded to reſume it upon any account of profit or of pleaſure.

But this gentleman, who diſclaimed and reſigned the uſe of a talent when applied to miſchievons purpoſes, did not refuſe to regale his friends with groteſque pictures of themſelves and others in private. No man ſo quick as Mr. Garrick in diſcerning an aukward geſture, a fooliſh ſtare, a diſſonant tone in ſpeaking, a ſhambling gait in walking, &c. &c. and I will add, no man more ready than he to ridicule upon the ſpot what was amiſs, for the benefit of the perſon whoſe picture he drew; the more original the character, its peculiars are more ſtriking.

If Henderſon ſhould in converſation make free with ſome few particularities in Mr. Garrick's manner, which the moſt accompliſhed man is not without; Mr. Garrick muſt not impute this to malice, ſpleen, ill-nature, or any illiberal motive;

tive; nor ſhould he think that he ought to be exempt from a treatment univerſally and indiſcriminately beſtowed by the perſon who has it in his power to give it. You may as well rob the muſician of his harpſichord, the painter of his pencil, the ſtatuary of his chizzel, or the poet of his muſe, as the mimick of his trick in taking-off.

Mr. Henderſon can have no inclination to give the leaſt offence to Mr. Garrick; he wiſhes to be on the moſt friendly terms with a man who is the honour and boaſt of the Engliſh ſtage, and whoſe great merit in acting we muſt deſpair of ſeeing ſurpaſſed, or perhaps equalled; one too, whom for his various and extenſive abilities I ſhould not ſcruple to rank with a Hogarth or a Foote;—a triumvirate of genius not eaſily to be paralleled.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Henderſon had not been introduced to the theatre under the care and inſtruction of ſo great a maſter as Mr. Garrick; and we muſt

muſt wonder that a man who has been ſelf-taught ſhould make ſuch a progreſs in his profeſſion.

Notwithſtanding the ill-natured prognoſtications of the criticks, Henderſon did not find the boards of Drury-Lane ſtage more rugged than thoſe of Bath or the Haymarket. It is computed that the ſum of 2500l. was taken in the firſt nine nights of his acting at that theatre, in the moſt barren part of the ſeaſon, and when none of the great people chuſe to make their appearance, for fear of playing to empty benches.—The applauſe he met with was in proportion to the audiences.

Before we venture to give our opinion of Henderſon as an actor, let us ſay ſomething of him as a man, and give ſome idea of his conduct in private life.

His intimate acquaintance give him the reputation of a modeſt, unaffected, and unaſſuming perſon. His converſation is eaſy, and occaſionally ſprightly. He does not attempt to ſhine, and overpower the

the company, by brilliant wit, bold vivacities, or briſk ſallies of imagination. What pleaſantry or facetiouſneſs he gives into, is unlaboured, ſpontaneous, and natural. Upon the whole, he is rather grave than gay in his deportment. He underſtands the French language well, and is not unacquainted with the Latin claſſicks. He is perfectly converſant in the beſt Engliſh writers; many ſelect paſſages of whom he has by heart, and repeats very judiciouſly and agreeably. He is certainly a moſt excellent mimick, not a mere ape of ſound or action; but will enter like Eſtcourt or Foote ſo perfectly into a character, that he will give a faithful reſemblance of the perſon he deſcribes, by dialogue or long diſcourſe, accompanied with proper look, geſture, and attitude.

I ſhall not inſiſt upon, or make a virtue of, his good behaviour to his mother; the age is not ſo degenerate as to be obliged to praiſe a man for a duty, the want

want of which would render him a deteſted character.

To ſpeak critically of Henderſon as an actor, will require great ſkill and much attention to the ſubject: to the firſt I have very ſmall pretenſions, nor can I ſpare leiſure enough for the ſecond; therefore I muſt beg the reader's indulgence for the little I ſhall preſume to ſay.

Henderſon's external requiſites for heroic, or what they call amiable characters, are not equal or ſtriking; but, however ſhort of our ideas he may fall when we ſee him in a pathetic lover or a mighty conqueror, he is not deficient in figure for ſome of Shakeſpeare's moſt maſterly characters—for Shylock, Falſtaff, Richard, Hamlet, and Lear. Should we liſten to the ridiculous criticiſms of ſome very hypercritical writers, we ſhould conclude that he was a lump of deformity, groſs and unwieldy in his make, with flabby cheeks of dough: his eyes too, they ſay, are little and blue; and indeed

indeed I ſhould think, according to theſe gentlemen, we muſt make uſe of teleſcopes to find them out; for, if you will believe them, they are ſunk into his head, or gone to pay a viſit to his brains. However, this is mere hyperbolical exaggeration; the publick muſt judge whether the criticks are to be believed or not. Great expreſſion in his countenance he hath not; yet, it has been juſtly obſerved, there is a ſtrong intelligence in his look, which convinces the ſpectator that his mind his ſufficiently awake to what he is about, and that he underſtands the character he repreſents, and feels the paſſion he aſſumes. His action, except in a few characters, ſuch as Falſtaff, Shylock, and Don John, is rather partial and reſtrained; whether owing to caution or want of fire, I will not pretend to ſay. He certainly is a moſt judicious ſpeaker, which proceeds from his perfect knowledge of his author. His voice has not that fine flexibility,

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nor that ſharp and pleaſing tone, we admired ſo much in Mr. Garrick; but Henderſon's emphaſis is always rightly placed. His attention to character, and to the buſineſs of the ſcene, was never exceeded by the great Roſcius himſelf. He is ſuch a maſter of his voice, that he never ſtrains it to an improper height, nor ever ſinks it ſo low as to deſtroy articulation. He is a complete maſter of what the players call *chaſte acting*; nor does he ever betray that eagerneſs for applauſe, which often diſconcerts the actor when he miſſes it.

The great variety of characters, totally diſſimilar, which he has acted, proves the univerſality of his genius. To go through a view of the ſeveral parts he has repreſented, would be a taſk ſuperior to my abilities. I have a more than common liking to the inimitable character of Sir John Falſtaff; and hope I ſhall be indulged in giving my ſentiments, crude as they are, upon *humour*

in general, and on this great maſter of it, the Fat Knight.

To trace the progreſs of humour in ſociety, would be thought a vain and ſuperfluous labour; and yet we cannot deny that this peculiar diſtinction, this characteriſtical mark, owes its being to Liberty. Under our old Norman and Saxon kings, when the feudal ſyſtem predominated, the court and city were equally ſtrangers to honeſt mirth and to that ſingularity of temper called humour. The ſtiff ceremony which attended the parade of chivalry, baniſhed all freedom of ſpeech; no man durſt to laugh at another, where the ſingle combat muſt have decided the goodneſs of the jeſt. But ſo prone is man to mirth, that it muſt find vent ſome way or other. Thoſe who durſt not ſeriouſly contradict or rally one another at a feaſt or entertainment, employed others to do that buſineſs for them. This urgent neceſſity of nature for unbending the mind, was the origin of the fool

or

or clown. Nobody could pretend to be angry at the gibes or jeſts which a party-coloured hireling threw at them; for he treated all alike, the inviter and the invited, and was himſelf the butt and jeſt of the company in his turn; and I doubt not but he often revenged the unhappineſs of his ſtation, by uttering ſevere truths and cuting ſatire, which none could reſent without expoſing themſelves to laughter.

At length Commerce, and her companion Freedom, uſhered into the world their genuine offspring, True Humour. To theſe ſhe owed her birth; and when they expire, it will require no great ſagacity to propheſy that ſhe will follow her parents to the ſame grave.

To reckon humour among the many other bleſſings of Queen Elizabeth's reign, would raiſe a laugh of contempt in many a grave countenance; and yet I will preſume to ſay that it was no inconſiderable one. It was a ſtrong proof that the ſubject enjoyed all his

deareſt rights, when he durſt be himſelf, be open, undiſguiſed, and free. Humour in France is loſt in cringe and ceremony. In Italy it degenerates into burleſque. In Spain, its native ſoil, it is ſhackled by bigotry and the Inquiſition. In England alone it flouriſhes unchecked. But to proceed: till the time of Elizabeth the word humour was not well underſtood, and ſcarce heard of; but it then grew of ſuch conſequence, that to be eſteemed a man of humour was the ardent wiſh of every faſhionable young fellow. This is ſufficiently proved by the abuſe and miſapplication of the term; for if a man wore a particular feather in his hat, or had ſomething ſingular in his garb, or uttered a parcel of ſtrange words, or ſwore a ridiculous and uncommon oath, he called himſelf a man of humour. The dramatic poets, who, in all ages, hold up the beſt mirrour of common manners, catched the public characters; and Shake-

ſpeare and Jonſon exhibited their various drawings of this fantaſtical Lady. The portraits of Jonſon were true and exact, but confined rather to the dry and diſagreeable abſurdities which ariſe from certain ſingularities of humour. His Moroſe, in the Silent Woman, is a finiſhed but diſagreeable picture of a man who ſecludes himſelf from the world to enjoy his own perverſities; but this author, even in his characters of humour, is learnedly pedantic. Let any man read Moroſe's ſoliloquy, in the ſecond act of the Silent Woman, where he enjoys the ruin of his nephew, and then tell me if the writing does not ſmell moſt rankly of the lamp. Shakeſpeare, like the ſun ſhining upon a landſcape, brightens and beautifies every object. Jonſon* degrades human nature, Shakeſpeare exalts it. The birth of Falſtaff

* Jonſon wears too ſervilely the hue and livery of the times he lived in. Shakeſpeare is not confined to time or place, he is of all nations and of all ages.

was the pride and glory of human wit; a character that is made up of abſurdities and contradictions, and yet is the moſt pleaſing and delicious entertainment that the dramatic page can furniſh: the robber, the * coward, the braggadocio, the luxurious and debauched raſcal, in the creative hands of Shakeſpeare, becomes the moſt agreeable, the moſt facetious, diverting, gay, and lively companion in the world: as if this great genius had a mind to ſhew his all-conquering powers, he makes us in love with the moſt profligate and abandoned fellow that ever reveled in a bawdy-houſe. The bright colours the rogue continually throws upon his vices, diſguiſe them ſo, that we always view them through a favourable medium; but in truth it is the *levity* of the character

* Notwithſtanding all that the very ingenious and elegant writer of the eſſay on the character of Falſtaff has ſaid in juſtification of the Knight's bravery, I ſhall not chuſe to give up ſuch a glaring feature of the Jolly Knight as his cowardice; I ſhould as ſoon believe Roderigo to be a man of ſenſe, and Iago a man of virtue, as ſuſpect Falſtaff to have any ſpark of bravery in him.

that carries him triumphantly through all his ſcenes of roguery and debauchery: he no where appears dark, malicious, cruel, and treacherous. My Lord Chief Juſtice, in the ſecond part of Henry the Fourth, after giving Falſtaff many a ſevere reproof, is brought into good humour with him by the very wantonneſs of Falſtaff's behaviour, in circumſtances of great ſerioufneſs to himſelf:—"Now," ſays his Lordſhip, "*the Lord lighten* "*thee, for thou art a great fool.*" Falſtaff, we may be ſure, was happy to get off ſo eaſily; and if he got clear of the head of the law, we may fairly acquit him.

Beaumont and Fletcher, and other dramatick writers, have attempted to give us imitations of Falſtaff; ſuch as Beſſus, Cacafogo, Sir Epicure Mammon, &c. but theſe are faint ſhadows, or rather caricatures, of the inimitable Knight. The author of Falſtaff's Wedding has, indeed, exhibited a very good reſemblance of the character

character he has revived, the comick mirth and true humour of Sir John.

I am of opinion that Falſtaff is the maſter-piece of Henderſon: he had no original before his eyes to draw from, ſo that the acting of this part was entirely of his own creation. I know that ſome of the old jovial bottle companions of Quin look upon this attempt of our young comedian as high treaſon againſt the memory of their friend; no man muſt dare to act Falſtaff after Quin.

Let us fairly examine the pretenſions of this great comedian to ſuch ſuperiority: I have often converſed with thoſe who knew him well; a man of quick conception, and ready wit, he certainly was; but his general turn of mind was prone to the ſarcaſtical, and his poignant wit was calculated to excite laughter often at the expence of others; his mirth was not generally of the joyous, liberal, and jovial kind. He had little of the milk

of human-kindneſs about him*; he took too much pleaſure in wounding and degrading thoſe whom he ſaw were inferior to himſelf: but it muſt be owned that he had his happy intervals of feſtivity and good humour; he was particularly lively and gay when his veniſon was well flavoured, and his claret of the genuine ſort; then, indeed, was he a moſt excellent companion, and the very ſoul of mirth. Though little acquainted with books, Quin knew mankind perfectly; he diſcerned with a quick eye characteriſtic folly and abſurdity, and took delight in expoſing them by ſtrong and pungent ridicule.

Such a man, with the advantage too of a large figure, an expreſſive countenance, with a full and well-toned voice, was not ill qualified to act Falſtaff. When we make allowance for the applauſe he

* Quin could occaſionally do a very good-natured action; he, at one time, in the politeſt manner, made a preſent of 300l. or 400l. to Mr. Thomſon, the Poet; and was, through life, the generous friend of Ryan.

really

really deſerved, and the partiality of friends and admirers, we cannot help ſaying, that upon the whole, though he pointed out many eſſential beauties of Falſtaff's character, he fell ſhort in ſome of the frolickſome, licentious, and joyous ſcenes of the humorous Knight. The actor was eaſily to be unmaſked; he was ſtill the ſurly James Quin, with that ſternneſs of brow, and ſevere gravity of ſpeech, of which hecould never diveſt himſelf entirely.

I will grant, that in ſome of the high domineering ſcenes of Falſtaff, Quin muſt have excelled all that went before him, or may poſſibly ſucceed him; but in the looſe, eaſy, merry, ludicrous, gay, and elbow-chair ſituations and attitudes of the character, Henderſon is greatly his ſuperior, by the confeſſion of many judicious perſons, who have ſeen both actors. For a young man to forget himſelf ſo far as to adopt all the infirmities and incumbrances of an old fat fellow of ſixty,

is

is certainly a difficult taſk; nay, to give the proper tones of voice peculiar to ſuch a part, is no eaſy matter; but that he ſhould enter ſtrongly into the high impudent roguery of Falſtaff, is ſcarce to be believed: and yet Henderſon's bragging of his unmatched valour, and his arch recovery from his being detected by the Prince and Poins, in the ſecond act; his high-finiſhed ſatirical deſcription of Bardolph's face in the third; and his inimitable ſoliloquy where he enjoys the cheating the King of his preſs-money in the fourth act, are ſuch irrefragable proofs of comic powers, as muſt place him, in my opinion, amongſt the firſt-rate actors of the age.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Should not forget to inform the reader, that in January 1775, Mr. Henderſon was in treaty with Mr. Harris of Covent-Garden theatre. Towards the end of January, an acquaintance of Mr. Henderſon, from his zeal to ſerve him, applied to Mr. Harris, and informed him that Henderſon was then totally diſengaged from Mr. Palmer; which indeed was a ſolemn truth, for the latter had given the former a month's time to determine whether he would or not renew his articles of engagement with him. Upon this gentleman's application, Mr. Harris expreſſed an eager deſire to encourage an actor, of whoſe great merit he had repeatedly heard ſo much from all ſorts of people. I have before me a copy of Mr. Henderſon's letter of application to the manager, in which he offers

offers his ſervice upon the terms formerly preſcribed by Mr. Garrick, his ſalary to be aſcertained by two common friends, reſtricted to the proviſo of its not exceeding 10l. nor being leſs than 5l. *per* week. I have likewiſe in my hand the manager's anſwer, dated February 6th following, in which he intimates, that he (Mr. Henderſon) might poſſibly be in treaty with Mr. Palmer. "I informed him (meaning Mr. Hen-" derſon's acquaintance) that if you " was in treaty with my particular " friend Mr. Palmer, or had any in-" tention of continuing with him, I " would by no means conſent to come " between you, whatever might be the " eventual advantages of the Covent-" Garden theatre."

" I muſt therefore inform you, that " though I think myſelf much obliged " to you for the preference you have " given our theatre, I muſt NOW *(what-" ever may be the reſult of your treaty, " abſolutely decline all thoughts of en-*

" *tering*

"*tering into any treaty with you,*
"*for an engagement at our thea-*
"*tre.*"*

Mr. Henderſon's ſole ambition was then, and always was, to appear on the London ſtage; no terms could be more moderate than thoſe which he propoſed.

I would here rectify an error of ſome conſequence, which I had fallen into: inſtead of the ſeveral London Patentees having ſeen Mr. Henderſon act, I ſhould have ſaid *ſeveral of the Patentees*; Mr. Garrick was not preſent at any play in which Henderſon performed a part at Bath, till the Spring of 1775. I would likewiſe inform the reader, that the very letter of Henderſon's, which gave Mr. Garrick ſo much offence, was dictated by his intimate acquaintance.

* In the former edition, too great a latitude was given to Mr. Haris's letter, who would have engaged Mr. Henderſon, as he has declared, but that he thought it would not have been honourable to interfere with Mr. Palmer's negociation.

Since

Since the publication of the firſt edition of this Memoir, Mr. Henderſon has received the firmeſt fiat of his merit in his profeſſion; the loud and repeated applauſes, of the very numerous and brilliant audiences he has appeared before, at the Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane. Falſtaff has been already exhibited this ſeaſon, near *twenty nights*, which we apprehend juſtifies the remarks in the foregoing pages. We learn, at the cloſe of the London ſeaſon, the Dublin Manager, at the deſire of many diſtinguiſhed perſons, have invited, on very liberal terms, Mr. Henderſon to Ireland, where we have no doubt he will receive that diſtinguiſhed and hoſpitable reception, which that kingdom is remarkable for beſtowing on real merit.

FINIS.